

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are pending in this application. In view of the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claim 11 as objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim but is otherwise allowable. Applicants appreciate this indication of allowability, but respectfully submit that at least claim 1, from which this claim depends, and the other claims depending from claim 1 are allowable for at least the reasons indicated below.

I. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2 and 4-10 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,145,266 to Saneshige et al. ("Saneshige"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, "a cavity provided between the sintered compacts at a center portion of the bearing in a direction of the axis," and "a gap continuously extending from an end portion of the cavity along the axis and having a width narrower than that of the cavity, wherein the gap has an opening at an end surface of the bearing or a peripheral surface of the bearing, and is used for a guide passage through which a lubricating oil discharged from the bearing is supplied to a predetermined place such as oil reservoir when the lubricating oil is discharged to the surface of the bearing by temperature rise of the lubricating oil due to the rotation of a shaft supported by the bearing." Saneshige does not disclose, either expressly or inherently, such features.

Saneshige merely discloses a bearing apparatus where oilless bearings 12 and 22 are supported by a bearing holder 5, which is made of an insulative material. See Saneshige, col. 3, lines 10-24 and Fig. 1. In Saneshige, grooves 12d and a cavity is provided among the oilless bearings (12 and 22) and the bearing holder (5). See Saneshige, Fig. 1. Thus, the

structure of the claimed oil impregnated sintered sliding bearing differs from that of Saneshige. For example, Saneshige does not disclose, either expressly or inherently, that the "cavity provided *between the sintered compacts* at a center portion of the bearing in a direction of the axis," as recited in claim 1.

Additionally, Saneshige at col. 3, line 45 to col. 4, line 1, states that:

The lubricant oil impregnated in the oilless bearings 12 and 22 is expanded and the viscosity of the lubricant oil is decreased by the friction heat. The lubricant gushes on the inner bearing surfaces 12a and 22a of the oilless bearings 12 and 22. The overflowed lubricant oil 9 is held by the grooves 12d and 22d made on outer peripheries of the oilless bearing 12 and 22, respectively, shown in FIG. 2. Since, the lubricant oil 9 is held in the grooves 12d and 22d by the surface tension of the oil, it hardly leaks to outside of the bearing holder 5.

Thus, in Saneshige, the grooves (12d) formed on outer peripheries of the oilless bearing 12 function itself as an oil reservoir. Thus, Saneshige does not disclose "a guide passage through which lubricating oil discharged from the bearing is supplied to a predetermined place such as oil reservoir when the lubricating oil is discharged to the surface of the bearing by temperature rise of the lubricating oil due to the rotation of a shaft supported by the bearing," as recited in claim 1.

For at least these reasons, Saneshige does not disclose, either expressly or inherently, each and every feature of claim 1, and thus does not anticipate claim 1 and its dependent claims. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

II. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action rejects claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Saneshige. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

As discussed above, Saneshige fails to disclose the claimed features that "a cavity provided between the sintered compacts at a center portion of the bearing in a direction of the axis," and "a gap continuously extending from an end portion of the cavity along the axis and

having a width narrower than that of the cavity, wherein the gap has an opening at an end surface of the bearing or a peripheral surface of the bearing, and is used for a guide passage through which a lubricating oil discharged from the bearing is supplied to a predetermined place such as oil reservoir when the lubricating oil is discharged to the surface of the bearing by temperature rise of the lubricating oil due to the rotation of a shaft supported by the bearing," as recited in claim 1, from which claim 3 depends. Likewise, Saneshige fails to teach, suggest or establish any reason or rationale to provide such features.

Furthermore, the claimed invention achieves unexpected results and advantages that the lubricating oil can be easily discharged via the gap and easily collected in the cavity since the cavity is provided between the sintered compacts at a center portion of the bearing in a direction of the axis. See specification, paragraphs [0014]-[0017]. Such results and advantages are not disclosed or even attainable by Saneshige.


For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 3 would not have been rendered obvious by Saneshige. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of this application are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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